



# Census

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## 12 insights about work and study from the 2021 Census

Media Release

Released 12/10/2022

**Source:** [Income and work: Census, 2021](#)  
[Education and training: Census, 2021](#)

The 2021 Census data released today provides a fascinating snapshot of employment and education in Australia. Trends and emerging fields of work and study can be seen in the Census data.

Here's a quick snapshot of 12 insights revealed by 2021 Census data:

1. Four big industries make up 40 per cent of the workforce. Health Care, Retail, Construction and Education employ the most people in Australia, accounting for over 40 per cent of the workforce.
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing have the oldest workforce. Almost 30 per cent of people working in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing are aged 60 years and over, compared to 11 per cent across all industries.
3. Young people are serving it up. Fast Food Cooks had a median age of 18 years old, followed by Café Workers at 21 years. The observation that young people work in hospitality is confirmed in the Census data: the Accommodation and Food industry has the youngest workforce, with 45 per cent aged under 25 years.
4. No changes in top occupations. Sales Assistants, Registered Nurses and General Clerks were the top three occupations in Australia, as they were in 2011 and 2016.
5. Female teachers are head of the class. The majority of Early Childhood Teachers (98 per cent), Primary School Teachers (85 per cent) and Secondary School Teachers (62 per cent) are female.

6. Construction slowly builds diversity. Female representation is increasing gradually in the Construction industry, with females accounting for 10 per cent of the 109,000 Construction Managers in 2021 (up from 7 per cent in 2016). The number of females with qualifications in Building Construction Management has doubled since 2016, to almost 2,000. However, only 1 per cent of Plumbers, Concreters, Roof Tilers, Bricklayers and Carpenters are female.
7. New technology, new jobs. Software and Application Programmer now appears in the top 20 occupations in Australia, and Security Science is the fastest growing field of study. Advances in technology are also reflected in declining occupations. There are 41,000 Keyboard Operators in 2021, compared to 170,000 Stenographers and Typists 50 years ago.
8. More than half of Australians now have a qualification. Over 11 million people in Australia have a vocational or tertiary qualification, more than half of the population aged 15 years and over and a 20 per cent increase since 2016. We are also up-skilling further, with 1.1 million people studying after having already obtained a non-school qualification.
9. Migration translating to work and study increases. Qualifications in Southern Asian Languages more than doubled since 2016 becoming the third fastest growing field of study. The growth in this area of study is in line with Punjabi emerging as one of the top five languages used at home and the continued growth in Indian and Nepalese communities throughout Australia. In 2021, there were 5,600 Translators and Interpreters in Australia.
10. Overseas born Australians are more qualified. People born overseas were more likely to have a non-school qualification (63 per cent) than those born in Australia (56 per cent). 4 in 5 Australians who were born in India (82 per cent) and Bangladesh (82 per cent) held a non-school qualification.
11. Students get down to business. The most common fields of study in Australia are Business, Teaching, Nursing and Building. In 2016, Business was also the most common field of study.
12. What do volunteers do when they're not volunteering? In the 2021 Census, the professions most likely to volunteer were Ministers of Religion, Legislators, and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers, also the top three in 2016.

We love our data at the ABS! Here are four more quirky findings about work that didn't make our top 12 but we didn't want to leave out -

- New industries, be...Gin (and other spirits) - Employment in the Spirit Manufacturing industry increased by 240 per cent and in Beer Manufacturing by 50 per cent.
- New business of home tours? - 17 per cent of Tour Guides worked from home in the week before the 2021 Census.
- Want to hire a DVD on Friday night? - There are 160 people employed in Video and Other

Media Rental Hiring Services in Australia.

- Making the count - There are 3,500 Statisticians in Australia and 400 work in Belconnen ACT... the humble Canberra home of the ABS.

Table 1: Count of employed persons in 2021

	Person count 2021	Percentage of 15+ population
Employed, full-time	7,095,103	34.1%
Employed, part-time	3,962,550	19.1%
Employed, away from work	991,758	4.8%
<b>Employed Total</b>	<b>12,049,410</b>	<b>58.0%</b>
Unemployed	646,442	3.1%
Not in the labour force	6,888,081	33.1%
Not Stated	1,200,851	5.8%
<b>Total population (15+)</b>	<b>20,784,787</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Table 2: Industry of employment in 2021

Industry	Employees	Proportion
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,751,717	14.5
Retail Trade	1,099,617	9.1
Construction	1,067,645	8.9
Education and Training	1,061,320	8.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	945,094	7.8
Public Administration and Safety	797,031	6.6
Accommodation and Food Services	783,737	6.5
Manufacturing	714,759	5.9
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	546,364	4.5
Financial and Insurance Services	445,121	3.7
Other Services	435,459	3.6
Administrative and Support Services	388,432	3.2
Inadequately described	369,939	3.1
Wholesale Trade	311,863	2.6
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	282,227	2.3
Mining	214,759	1.8
Arts and Recreation Services	188,479	1.6
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	187,621	1.6
Information Media and Telecommunications	166,872	1.4
Not stated	156,996	1.3
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	134,368	1.1
Total	12,049,410	100.0

Table 3: Top 20 Occupations in 2021

	Occupation	Male	Female	Person count
1	Sales Assistants (General)	174,270	339,817	514,084
2	Registered Nurses	30,614	232,130	262,742
3	General Clerks	33,243	211,604	244,849
4	Aged and Disabled Carers	53,078	174,454	227,535
5	Retail Managers	95,063	99,680	194,743
6	Primary School Teachers	24,530	140,355	164,891
7	Child Carers	7,101	155,386	162,490
8	Truck Drivers	154,554	7,006	161,562
9	Receptionists	10,451	150,143	160,598
10	Accountants	73,623	84,744	158,366
11	Secondary School Teachers	58,850	96,994	155,842
12	Commercial Cleaners	58,165	82,625	140,795
13	Storepersons	99,087	35,573	134,656
14	Advertising, Public Relations and Sales Managers	73,894	60,644	134,533
15	Electricians	129,102	2,811	131,907
16	Contract, Program and Project Administrators	53,596	71,564	125,162
17	Software and Applications Programmers	94,374	22,555	116,927
18	Kitchenhands	51,830	63,725	115,550
19	Carpenters and Joiners	112,142	1,221	113,362
20	Office Managers	11,834	99,990	111,828

Note: Small random adjustments have been made to all cell values to protect the confidentiality of data. These adjustments may cause the sum of rows or columns to differ by small amounts from table totals.

Table 4: Most male dominated occupations in 2021

	Occupation	Male (%)	Female (%)
1	Bricklayers and Stonemasons	99.1	0.9
2	Plumbers	99.0	1.0
3	Sheetmetal Trades Workers	99.0	1.0
4	Carpenters and Joiners	98.9	1.1
5	Roof Tilers	98.9	1.1
6	Concreters	98.9	1.1

Table 5: Most female dominated occupations in 2021

	Occupation	Female (%)	Male (%)
1	Midwives	98.7	1.3
2	Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers	97.6	2.4
3	Dental Assistants	97.5	2.5
4	Personal Assistants	97.1	2.9
5	Beauty Therapists	97.0	3.1

Table 6: Occupations with highest median age in 2021

	Occupation	Median age 2021	Median age 2016
1	Livestock Farmers	58	57
2	Bus and Coach Drivers	57	55
3	Caretakers	57	56
4	Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers	56	55
5	Caravan Park and Camping Ground Managers	54	54

Table 7: Occupations with the youngest median age in 2021

	Occupation	Median age 2021	Median age 2016
1	Fast Food Cooks	18	18
2	Cafe Workers	21	24
3	Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	22	21
4	Sports Coaches, Instructors and Officials	22	23
5	Waiters	22	22

Table 8: Top 10 fields of study for non-school qualifications in 2021

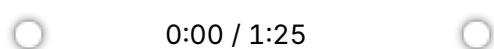
	Field of study	Male	Female	Total
1	Business and Management	474,510	669,578	1,144,084
2	Teacher Education	191,718	644,694	836,410
3	Nursing	56,517	551,761	608,276
4	Building	566,332	13,274	579,605
5	Human Welfare Studies and Services	71,350	481,641	552,990
6	Accounting	232,933	297,379	530,313
7	Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Technology	401,202	24,832	426,035
8	Food and Hospitality	215,219	172,607	387,827
9	Engineering and Related Technologies, nfd[1](#_ftn1).	338,761	39,479	378,240
10	Mechanical and Industrial Engineering and Technology	336,820	11,836	348,652

[1](#\_ftnref1).nfd – means not further defined and indicates that the Census response did not have enough detail to classify the person into a finer detailed qualification.

Note: Small random adjustments have been made to all cell values to protect the confidentiality of data. These adjustments may cause the sum of rows or columns to differ by small amounts from table totals.

## Downloadable audio quotes

### Interesting 2021 Census data insights - Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician



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Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician, discusses insights from the 2021 Census and what it tells us about the way we work.

[Transcript +](#)

## Second release of 2021 Census data - Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician



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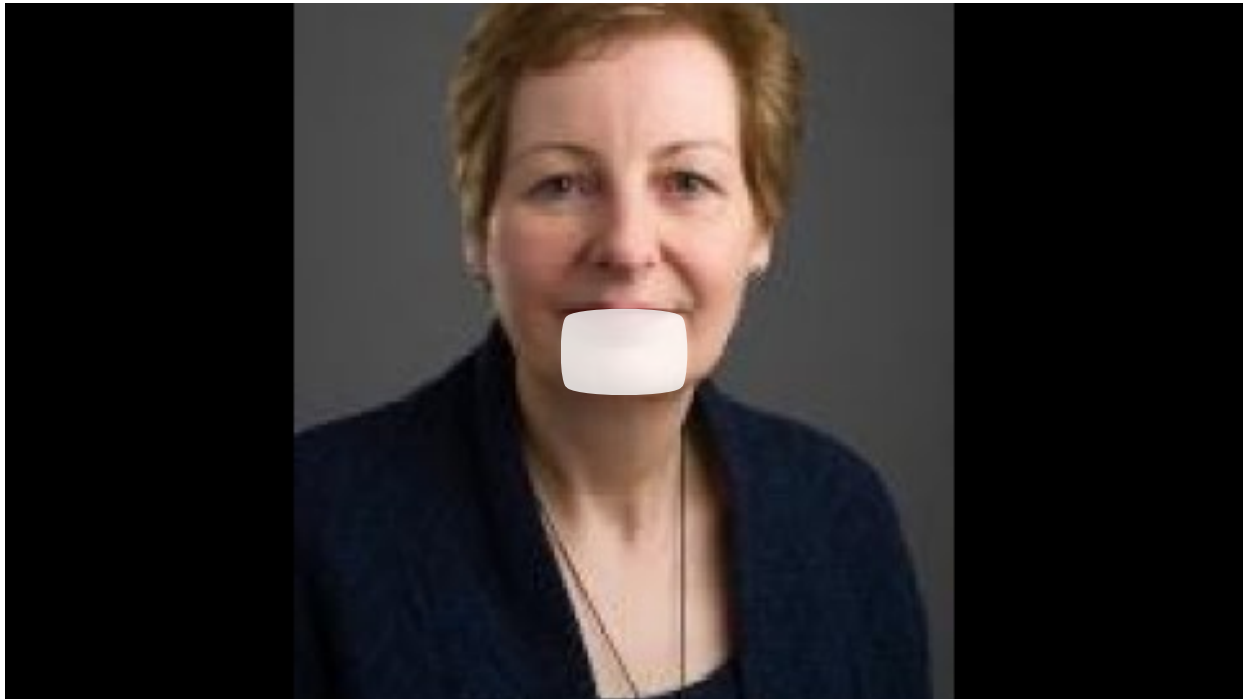


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Dr David Gruen AO, Australian Statistician, shares interesting data insights from the second release of 2021 Census data.

[Transcript +](#)

## Downloadable video quotes



Teresa Dickinson, Senior Responsible Officer for the 2021 Census, discusses what the latest data release tells us about Australia, and how people can access this data.

[Download mp4 \[34.96 MB\]](#)

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- Search for 2021 Census data through the [QuickStats tool \(https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area).

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